

VZCZCXRO6889
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHVJ #2372/01 3061904
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 021904Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7320
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
RUFOAOA/USNIC SARAJEVO BK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 002372

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EUR FOR DICARLO, EUR/SCE (FOOKS, STINCHCOMB); NSC FOR
BRAUN; OSD FOR BEIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/02/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EU](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: DAS DICARLO'S MEETINGS WITH POLITICAL
LEADERS

REF: SARAJEVO 2236

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES ENGLISH FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

Summary -----

¶1. (C) EUR DAS DiCarlo held bilateral meetings with political leaders on the margins of the October 30-31 PIC to discuss the current political crisis in Bosnia. She reviewed USG concerns with Haris Silajdzic (SBiH), Dragan Covic (HDZ), and Sulejman Tihic. Silajdzic complained about the high bar the Europeans had set on police reform and their unwillingness to accept a less than perfect agreement but gave no indication that he would show flexibility and work with Dodik on police reform. Tihic expressed support for the High Representative Lajcak's measures, noting that the Lajcak must carry out implementation. Tihic suggested a return to constitutional reform TALKS. Covic focused on his hosting of the Mostar declaration on police reform and the possibility of further talks on constitution reform, and on the Croat constitutional reform platform. Foreign Minister Alkalaj reiterated Silajdzic rhetoric on police reform and expressed surprise that Russia did not fight for stronger language in the PIC communique. DAS DiCarlo and FM Alkalaj also touched briefly on defense property and Bosnia and the Adriatic Charter. End Summary.

Party Leaders on the Crisis -----

¶2. (C) During an October 31 meeting, DAS DiCarlo thanked Silajdzic for his restraint during the current crisis since an exchange between Dodik and Silajdzic would only serve to exacerbate the situation. Silajdzic acknowledged this, but noted that restraint was difficult. He claimed that PDP's Mladen Ivanic is a radicalizing factor, and that he and others would be crucial in helping Dodik to walk back from confrontation. Silajdzic doubted whether Dodik knows what to steps to take next. The Ambassador urged Silajdzic to improve the political situation by working on concrete measures on police reform with OHR and the EU Police Mission (EUPM). Claiming that he understood from High Representative Lajcak that the Mostar Agreement of October 28, which set out a framework for next steps on police reform, was sufficient for Bosnia to initial a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU, Silajdzic responded that such measures

would be a "psychological step backwards." Emphasizing that tensions were rising, Silajdzic claimed that a Serb paramilitary brigade of 5,000 is being formed in Serbia with support from the Serb Orthodox church and is also recruiting in Montenegro and Bosnia. (Note: Silajdzic passed a paper outlining his assertions, which we are reviewing. End Note.)

13. (C) Silajdzic went on to complain about the high bar the Europeans have set for Bosnia's initialing of an SAA and their unwillingness to accept a less than perfect agreement on police reform that would help Bosnia get over the SAA threshold. Silajdzic accused the Europeans of squeezing Bosnia while allowing Romania and Bulgaria to join the EU. He also complained about the close relations between Serbia and Republika Srpska and the need to normalize relations with Russia, and others, to avoid the practice of high-level officials visiting the country regularly without coming to Sarajevo and consulting with the state-level government. The Ambassador urged Silajdzic to seize the opportunity presented to build on the principles outlined in Mostar declaration.

Sulejman Tihic

14. (C) SDA President Sulejman Tihic told DAS DiCarlo that PM Dodik is not the same man he worked with in the past and is now so strong that he has lost touch with reality. However, Tihic said that Dodik had suffered a recent defeat with low turnout during October 29 demonstrations in the RS, which Tihic said was a sign that people are tired of confrontation. Tihic voiced his support for the PIC communique and shared his view that that the worse step High

SARAJEVO 00002372 002 OF 002

Representative Lajcak could take now would be to appease Dodik.

15. (C) DAS DiCarlo thanked Tihic for his participation in the Mostar meeting and for signing of the declaration on police reform. She said it is important for Europe to see that there are reasonable people in Bosnia. Responding to DAS DiCarlo's question as to what Tihic might see as a way forward, Tihic suggested that perhaps Dodik and Silajdzic could move forward with three of the four constitutional amendments, and leave entity voting aside. The Ambassador replied that this strategy would be difficult since entity voting is the most controversial element of constitution reform.

Dragan Covic

16. (C) During an October 31 meeting with DAS DiCarlo, HDZ-BiH President Dragan Covic also commented that Dodik has been corrupted by power, while Lajcak is patient and tactical. He expressed concerns about close relations between Belgrade and Banja Luka, asserting that Belgrade is abusing Banja Luka while giving it a sense of false hope. Both DAS DiCarlo and the Ambassador thanked Covic for his role in realizing the October 28 Mostar meeting. He also elaborated on the Croats' Kresevo Declaration on constitutional reform principles. Bosnia would have a federal structure with a state, middle, and local level with four federal units. When asked about Dodik's support for the plan, Covic claimed that Dodik "supports 90 percent of the plan" and that his primary concern is for Republika Srpska to remain a single federal unit. Covic expressed his hope for Bosnia to keep pace with Croatia, since failure to do so would result in Croats in Bosnia relocating to Croatia. He also shared his view that Serbia will also move forward. Regarding measures that could be taken to help Dodik step back from the crisis, Covic replied that Dodik has been given enough chances.

FM Alkalaj

17. (C) FM Sven Alkalaj, who also met with DAS DiCarlo at his request on November 1, echoed many of the themes raised by Silajdzic. He insisted that the EU show flexibility on police reform, accept the Mostar Agreement, and not insist on a perfect deal. DiCarlo replied that EU expectations are far from being met in the Mostar Agreement and would require more detail. She also stressed the importance of recommitment to Dayton. Alkalaj agreed that Lajcak was correct in imposing the October 19 measures, which, in his view, are not directed against a particular ethnic group. Alkalaj said he is surprised that the Russian position in the PIC communique was not stronger and Moscow had not insisted on a reference to the Bonn Powers. Alkalaj claimed that Dodik wants Republika Srpska to be independent and not part of Serbia. Dodik's vision for Bosnia, he said, is for Bosnia to be a federal state with Republika Srpska and other "federal units" having the right to secede. DAS DiCarlo pointed out that Dodik's comments about the return of competencies is troubling. Alkalaj, however, downplayed Dodik's statements, as rhetorical. DAS DiCarlo advised Alkalaj that Haris Silajdzic should tone down his rhetoric on abolishing the entities.

18. (C) On defense-related issues, DAS DiCarlo remarked that defense property transfers, a PfP requirement, is stalled and could undermine Bosnia's NATO aspirations. Alkalaj claimed Dodik does not see NATO as a threat and that stalled defense reform is not the result of RS political opposition. Discussing Croatia's opposition to expanding the Adriatic Charter before they get their NATO invitation, Alkalaj said he understood their position, since they believe that Bosnia would undermine their chances of joining NATO. He underscored, however, that Bosnia remains focused on the PfP.

ENGLISH